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LECONTES' UNPUBLISHED WORKS ON PLANTS

As part of E. L. Greene's collection of plants, his library, manuscripts, etc., there was left to the University of Notre Dame a set of unpublished, water-colored original drawings, made by John B. Leconte, evidently intended to illustrate his articles written on Violets, Bladderworts, and a monograph of *Gratiola*. These communications were published by the author in the rare volumes I-IV of the *Annals of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York*. (1824-1837). Leconte probably was unable to bear the expense of reproducing these exquisitely colored plants which were life size, and so they were never published. His notes on *Gratiola* are in Vol. I. p. 103, on *Utricularia* in Vol. I, p. 72, and *Viola*, Vol II, p. 135. The most important work of all his Monograph of the Genus *Viola* in South-eastern Atlantic States, is also absolutely indispensable to the student of Iodography. Rare as the work in the *Annals* is, the original plates unpublished had not even been ever seen by some of Dr. Greene's most intimate friends. When in fact on one occasion one of them asked him to be allowed to reproduce a single critical species, Dr. Greene considered the request almost audacious.¹

Dr. Greene once told us he came into possession of this unique treasure in a second-hand book-shop in Philadelphia. The collection of drawings numbering 42 had previously been in the hands of Isaac C. Martindale who obtained them when Lecontes' effects were auctioned off. Dr. T. Holm, of Washington, informed us that Haryard University has tracings of the illustrations, probably made before Dr. Greene purchased the originals. In several places of Dr. Greene's writings we find references to these plates, and no doubt they helped much to give him such accurate knowledge of our eastern violets, and their identity, a subject in which he was rightly recognized as one of our most careful and exact authorities. He refers to the drawings in Leaflets 1, 2. Because of a reference in Pittonia V, 84, it might be inferred that as early as 1898 he had these; for he states then that he "possesses LeContes' unpublished plates." Another reference is found in Mid. Nat. III. p. 84.² seems to point to the supposition that Dr. Greene acquired these drawings subsequent to May 1898. (Vide. Pitt. III, 313 et. seq.)

¹ " . . . I had quite to my satisfaction identified it (*V. affinis*) by LeConte's description quite anterior to the time when I saw the unpublished figures referred to; and that only confirmed my earlier determination of it."

"Now on arrival in Washington of the LeConte botanical art treasure, as my property, I called Mr. Pollard's attention to these longer and more pointed leaves of this plant, as bringing it nearer than any other of our violets to the poor figure of Hills' *V. obliqua*. I recall that Mr. Pollard more than once came back to study that particular plate and finally to make of me the remarkable request—I do not like to use the less mild term audacious in connection with an old and valued friend—that he be permitted to make a copy of the plate. Doubtless I might have forgotten the whole circumstance of my friend's very special interest in the fine colored plate under which LeConte, now ninety years since had written in pencil: "*V. affinis*" but for his surprising request."

² There is also an article on *Ruellia* Vol. I. p. 140, but there are no drawings in the manuscript of this genus.

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These remarkable water-colored drawings made and annotated by Le Conte himself were undoubtedly intended by him to accompany his monographs in the Annals of the Lyceum of New York referred to. Dr. Greene once told us himself that they were very likely left out because of the great expense of reproduction. There are altogether 25 life size plates of Violets, 10 of Bladderworts, and 7 of *Gratiolae*. Some of the last are unfinished as to coloring, and though we had on various occasions seen this work during Dr. Greene's lifetime, we were ourselves hitherto unaware of this last group of illustrations. There are also penciled notes on the margins of the plates by Dr. Greene himself as to the identity of the plants shown.

Mr. Martindale the former owner of this treasure made the following note on the inside of the front cover of the book: "Purchased at the sale of the Library of Dr. J. LeConte, Phila., 5-1884. They are the original drawings of Major LeConte. Isaac C. Martindale."

It was for some time subsequent to the death of Dr. Greene, Nov. 10, 1915, that these plates had been lost or had disappeared. Diligent search was made for the collection without avail. While catalogueing the periodicals of the Green Library we came upon them quite accidentally hidden in an out-of-the-way place and behind some books on the shelves. Dr. Greene had put them there before leaving on his last trip to Washington; for they were not in the library a week previous to his departure.

After carefully weighing matters from all points of view it has been decided to allow reproductions to be made of the unpublished plates of LeConte. The articles in the Annals of the N. Y. Lyceum will be reprinted and accompanied by actual size photographic copies of the plates 43 in all and one photographic copy of Mr. C. Martindale's note in the original cover. Accompanying the facsimile photographic prints we aim to give a short résumé of references to them in Dr. Greene's writings. Owing to the limited number of copies that will appear it will be necessary to request the various institutions, academies and individuals to send in requests beforehand for copies by subscription. If a sufficient number are ordered or asked to be reserved the work will be undertaken. The photographs will be made by the most expert artist that can be had for the work from the most sensitive orthochromatic plates. The prints themselves will be made on highly polished linen-backed paper 7 x 10 inches. Another expert artist has consented to color the prints to the original at an extra cost of 30c. apiece, for those who wish color reproductions. The photographs will be the best that the modern art can obtain, and a sample will be sent to those who wish to examine the nature of the technique, on condition of its immediate return as the cost of making prints is necessarily very expensive. The price is \$25. No copies will be given or made out afterwards. Nor will the work be undertaken unless a sufficient number of subscribers apply. Address:

DIRECTOR OF THE HERBARIUM,
Notre Dame, Indiana.